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FOURTH PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE AMERICAN EXCAVATIONS AT SARDES IN ASIA MINOR

THE fourth excavating season at Sardes closed with the end of June, 1913, after a period of five months of work. From the point of view of the history of art it was unquestionably our most brilliant season thus far, and the discoveries in the field

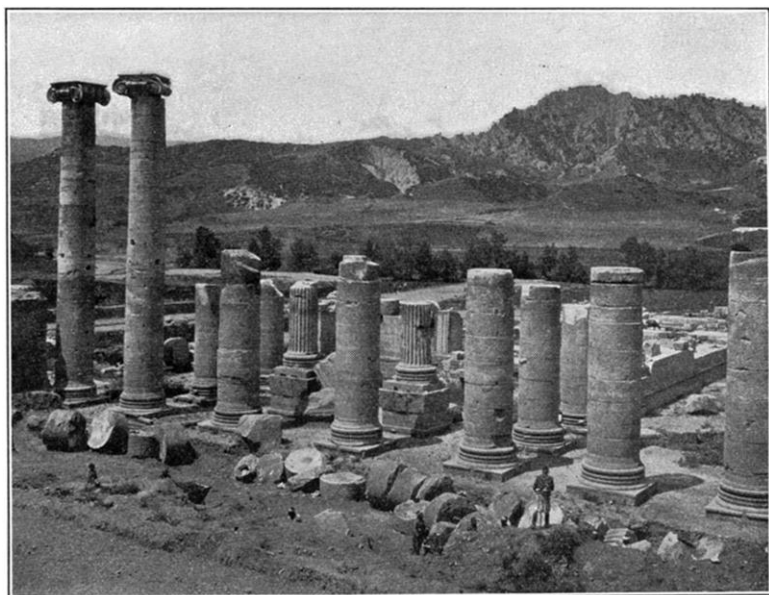


FIGURE 1.—TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS AT SARDES; FROM THE EAST.

of inscriptions were hardly inferior in importance to those of last year. The lines of the great excavations about the temple of Artemis were carried back a considerable distance on all sides, leaving the temple in the midst of a broad open space (Fig. 1) instead of at the bottom of a narrow and deep trench as it appeared to be at the close of last season. In this newly

excavated territory there were unearthed, at the northwest, the foundation walls of a large group of houses on different levels, of different periods, and of varying qualities of construction, a small building, existing only in foundations, with a flight of marble steps, and a tunnel-vaulted tomb of the Christian period. On the north side there were more foundation walls of poor construction at high, Roman levels and a massive structure of Roman concrete with thick walls and projecting buttresses that was excavated with great difficulty and rendered impossible an



FIGURE 2. — HEAVY WALLS OF ROMAN CONCRETE NORTH OF TEMPLE.

examination of the lower levels in its vicinity (Fig. 2). To the east of the temple a precipitous mass of hard-packed earth 40 feet high was encountered not 100 feet from the façade of the building. The earth was as hard as the hardest parts of the acropolis formation, and the steep slope was well covered with constructions of the Roman period and strewn with pottery fragments not earlier than the first century. This discovery held up for the year all further progress in this direction.

The clearing on the south revealed only fragments of some walls of boulders, foundations of poor constructions of late date, and a cemetery of the Mediaeval Byzantine period. In all this digging the levels were pretty well marked, by Lydian pottery on the lowest, by Greek coins on the intermediate, and by Roman and Byzantine pottery and coins on the upper levels. The inscriptions found here were not numerous, though most of those discovered were of more than usual interest and importance.

The one disappointment of the year was the failure to find the temple of Zeus, indications of which appeared to be very

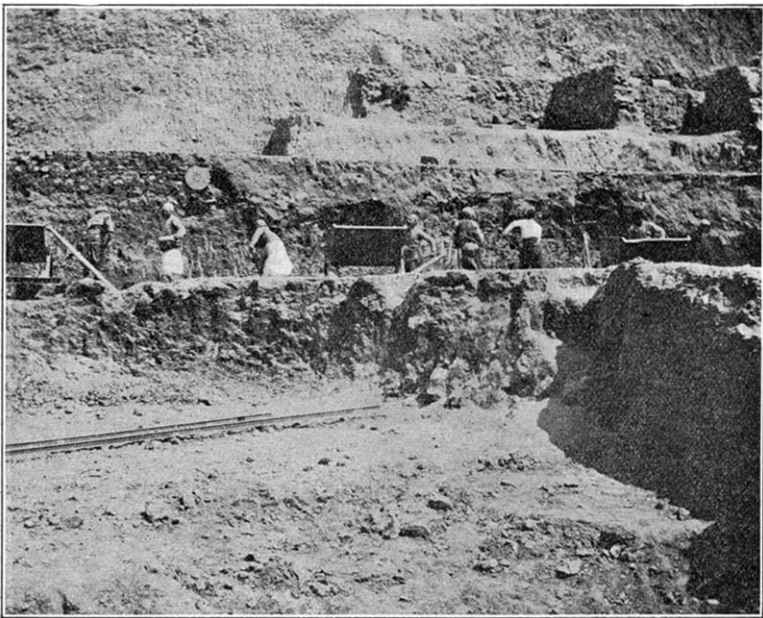


FIGURE 3. — ROMAN CONSTRUCTIONS ON SLOPE TO EAST OF TEMPLE.

promising at the close of the last season. The steep mass of earth to the east and southeast of the temple of Artemis seemed to preclude all further search in those directions, and the great building of Roman concrete mentioned above delayed progress toward the north and northeast. It is not impossible that this building, with its thick outer walls and intricate system of interior cross walls, covers the temple for which we are look-

ing, and this can be definitely determined in one more season. On the arrival of Mr. William Warfield, the geologist of the expedition, it was made clear that the hard mass at the east and southeast of the temple was not an original formation, but a great fragment of the acropolis hill, which had fallen at some time during the historical period and which had been redistributed and had hardened again, forming a steep wall directly in front of the temple. The archaeological evidence seems to prove that this catastrophe was coincident with the earthquake of the year 17 A.D.; for it is plain that the steep slope was terraced and masked by small buildings — exedras and the like — not earlier than the first century (Fig. 3). The pottery found in the terraces further supports this theory; while excavations under the foot of the slope brought to light many fragments of Lydian pottery of an early date. It is now important to devise a method for clearing away enough of this late geological deposit to reveal the condition of the Lydian and Hellenistic objects under it, and, if these results are of sufficient importance to warrant the removal of the mass of hardened débris, to devote time and means to this very difficult task.

Toward the end of the season a discovery was made which gives hope that the end of a sacred way has been found. This is a row of foundations and bases of monuments extending northward from the north side of the temple in the direction of the great high road which runs east and west. The row would represent the west side of a broad road extending out from the middle of the temple on its minor axis. An important inscription and the first significant remains of sculpture were found among the bases at this point. The inscription in question is a short bilingual dedication in Lydian and Greek upon a statue base. It is the first and only bilingual inscription of its kind that is known thus far. The sculptures consist of two lions and an eagle that were originally set up on one large pedestal. One of the two lions (Fig. 4) is recumbent, with its head turned to one side, and is intact but for the nose. The other is in a sitting posture; its forelegs and half its head are missing. The eagle is headless. The drawing, modelling, and details of the three figures are archaic, but do not resemble figures of the same type in Egyptian, Assyrian, or early Greek

art. One may conclude, therefore, that they are a new type which would naturally be called Lydian. Other fragments of sculpture and some interesting details of architectural ornament, including a corner acroterium from the temple roof, were found in the course of the excavations about the temple. Coins continued to come to light in great numbers as the excavations of the temple precinct advanced; these include a hoard of sixty tetradrachms of the Hellenistic period, in a

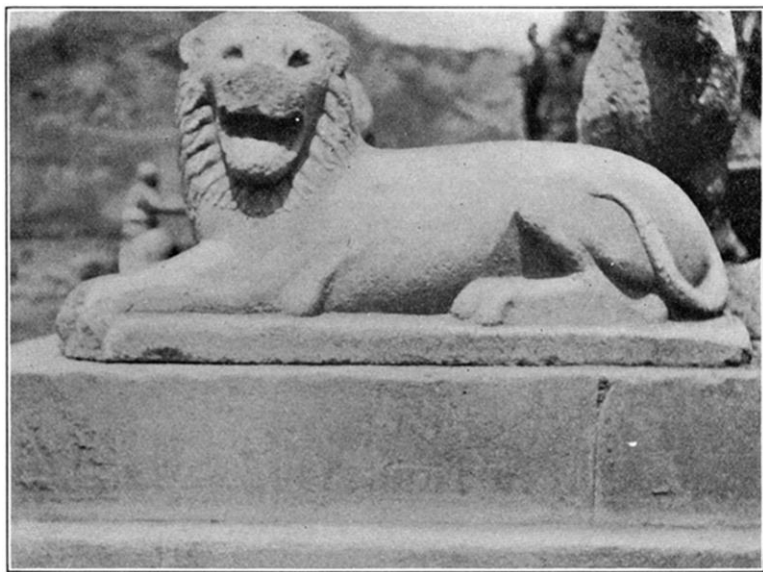


FIGURE 4. — MARBLE LION FOUND ON NORTH SIDE OF TEMPLE.

beautiful state of preservation, besides many single coins in silver and bronze of widely separate epochs and more or less well preserved.

An important discovery in the field of sculpture was made outside the main excavations near the road at the northern edge of the Roman city. This was a sarcophagus of the Sidamara type. It is in a badly broken condition, but the cover is almost complete, though in many pieces, and the fragments of the two ends and of the side that were sculptured will, when pieced together, form nearly three-quarters of these parts as they were originally. The figures reclining upon the couch

which forms the cover of the sarcophagus are those of two women, apparently mother and daughter; the head of the elder is perfect but for a slight break at the tip of the nose; the lower part of the face of the younger woman is broken away. One side and the ends of the sarcophagus itself are divided into panels, or niches, by twisted columns with flowing



FIGURE 5. — PANEL FROM ROMAN SARCOPHAGUS.

composite capitals. Each niche contains a figure (Fig. 5); the tops of the niches vary in form, having pointed or curved pediments or straight entablatures. The life-size figures of the cover are sculptures of good Roman type, like figure sculpture of the second century A.D.; those of the panels are curiously unequal in artistic quality, some of them resembling copies of

good Greek work, others giving the effect of very late, almost of Christian, sculpture. An inscription on the cover, giving the name KA·ANT·ΞABEINHΞ, is carved in Greek letters which appear to be of the earlier period. The sarcophagus stood upon a high pedestal which, like a parotid, stood at one side of a flight of steps in front of a large mortuary chamber. The plan of this chamber, which is that of a triconchos, with its porch of four columns and broad, high parotids, will make an interesting publication in connection with the sarcophagus which formed a part of its decoration.

The finds in the tombs of the old necropolis were, without question, the most important yet made in our tomb excavations at Sardes. Several hundred pieces of pottery were found, including a large number of specimens of Lydian ware of the sixth century B.C. and earlier. These last were discovered in tombs that had been crushed in soon after they were made. Most of the pieces were in fragments, but a considerable number are whole, and the collection presents great variety in shapes, clays, colors, and decorations.

An ivory head of extremely archaic type was found, and a small number of masks and figurines of the archaic and later periods. Bronze mirrors, some of them with ivory handles, were numerous in the tombs, as usual, with other objects of the same material, such as a complete yard scale, vases, and dishes of various shapes. A number of gold necklaces of unusual beauty of detail were found, together with small gold ornaments, and rings, some with archaic seals cut in the gold, others with scarabs of carnelian cut with seal designs in the style which is now believed to have been of purely Lydian origin, and all in most perfect technique. Individual seals of conoid shapes, usually with gold or silver mountings, and having the characteristic devices, continued to come to light, and we may say that practically every one of them is a gem of the first quality, so far as technique is concerned; though they differ in elaborateness of detail as in interest of subject. The most interesting group of gold objects found this season, from the point of view of art history, was a set of plaques and rosettes of repoussé work, all found in a single tomb and as part of one burial. There are six larger plaques, each bearing

two sitting human-headed lions, with beards and wings, facing each other, and surmounted by a winged disc of Egyptian style, all framed in bands adorned with rosettes and crested with battlements very Assyrian in type. The nine smaller plaques have no frames; each consists of a sphinx in a walking pose. The plaques have small holes for the rivets, by means of which they were affixed to a textile fabric or to leather. The rosettes are over forty in number, and are made like buttons with shanks at the back. The whole series is executed with the highest refinement of goldsmith's work, which appears to even better advantage under a magnifying glass.

To this brief résumé of the year's finds should be added mention of a tunnel-vaulted tomb of the Christian period which was excavated out in the plain. This tomb was entered through a trap door in the roof, and had been rifled. The wall paintings, which were well preserved, present well-executed designs of peacocks and smaller birds, and flowers and baskets of fruit, in several brilliant colors.

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